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The Significance of the Griffin Motif in Tarquinia

BY

Liisa Carol Enders

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

IN

Classical Archaeology

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND CLASSICS

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my Mom and Dad for all of their love and support. They believed in me and they always told me that I could accomplish anything if I put my mind to it. They encouraged me to do my best and to follow my dreams. Thank you.

Abstract

This thesis examines the significance of the griffin motif on nenfro stelae in Tarquinia from 650 B.C. to 550 B.C. The thesis is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1, the introduction, examines the Etruscan city of Tarquinia and its geographic location and history. Tarquinia's trade relations with other major centers is examined historically and archaeologically. Chapter 2 looks at the griffin motif in Asia Minor and Tarquinia. Detailed descriptions of the griffin motif are given. Literary evidence for the motif is examined along with religious beliefs and the context in which the motifs are found. Chapter 3 examines the role of the griffin motif in the Greek and Greek influenced world. Literary and physical evidence, along with religious beliefs, is discussed. Chapter 4 is the conclusion wherein the significance of the griffin motif on nenfro stelae from the seventh century is defined in relation to the motif's significance in Greece and Asia Minor.

Table of Contents

	Pages
List of Illustrations	
I The Griffin Motif in Tarquinian Art	1-14
A) Introduction	1
B) Tarquinia - Location and History	1
II The Griffin Motif in Asia Minor and Tarquinia	15-38
A) History and Significance in Asia Minor	15
B) Description	15
C) Griffin in Tarquinia	16
D) Nenfro Stelae - description and function	18
E) Literary Evidence	20
F) Religion in Etruria	21
G) Griffin in Context	26
III The Griffin Motif in the Greek World	39-70
A) Entry into the Greek World	39
B) Literary Evidence	39
C) Griffin on Greek Mainland	46
D) Griffin in Classical Period	49
E) Political Unrest and Religion	50
F) Griffin in Greek Colonies in S. Italy	56
G) Griffin and Dionysus	64
H) Conclusion about Griffin in Greek and Greek Influenced World	69
IV Conclusion	71-75
Illustrations	76-87
Bibliography	88-91

List of Illustrations

ill. 1a). Map of Italy and Etruria (Grant, M., The Etruscans, p.234).

ill. 1b). Map of Tarquinia and its territory including its three ports (Grant, M., The Etruscans, p. 130).

ill. 2. Pozzo Grave (Hencken, H., Tarquinia, Villanovans and Early Etruscans, p.21).

ill. 3. Biconical Urn (Bonfante, L., Etruscan Life and Afterlife, p. 97).

ill. 4. Ivory Inlay from Megiddo (Frankfort, H., Art and Architecture of the Orient, p.148).

ill. 5. Nenfro Stele: Type 1 (Notizie degli Scavi, 1930, vol. 6, p.116, fig.3).

ill. 6. Nenfro Stele: Type 2 (Notizie degli Scavi, 1930, vol. 6, p.120, fig.8).

ill. 7. Nenfro Stele from Tarquinia (Coarelli, F., Etruscan Cities, p.186).

ill.8. Possible Placement of Nenfro Stelae in tombs (Notizie degli Scavi, 1930, vol. 6, p.169, fig.48).

ill. 9. Nenfro Stele (Jucker, I., Italy of the Etruscans, p.289).

ill.10. Griffin Protome (one of three) from Olympia (Mattusch, C., "A Trio of Griffins from Olympia", Hesperia LIX, pl.92).

ill.11. Bronze Cut Out of Griffin from Olympia (Boardman, J., Greek Art, ill. 50).

ill.12. Belly Amphora by Nessos Painter with Griffins (Berlin, Staatliche Museen 1961.7) (Boardman, J., Athenian Black Figure Vases, ill.8).

ill.13. Berlin 1023. Alabastron dating to ca. 620 B.C. (Payne, H., Necrocorinthia, pl.15.6).

ill.14. Berlin 2641 - Apollo riding Griffin with Artemis, Leto and Hermes (Metzger, H., Les Représentations dans la Céramique Attique du IVe Siècle, Pl. XXIV).

ill.15. London E543 - Apollo riding Griffin with Artemis and Leto (Metzger, H., Les Représentations dans la Céramique Attique du IVe Siècle, Pl. XXIV).

ill.16. Dionysus on Griffin from Japanese Private Collection (Kunstwerke Der Antike Auktion 56, 119).

I The Griffin Motif in Tarquinian Art

A) Introduction

In some cases, motifs are affected by the social realities of the times and vary from region to region as a result of trade contacts or isolation. Religion and religious beliefs can also affect motifs. Understanding the significance of various motifs in art can be a difficult task. The significance may or may not be obvious at first glance, and indeed, it may change depending on its relation to other motifs and figures. It is my intention to discuss the significance of the griffin motif in Tarquinia from 650-550 B.C. In order to better understand the motif and its meaning, the history of Tarquinia and its location and relation to other major centres must first be examined. Then, the history of the griffin motif and its significance in Asia Minor must be established. The griffin in Tarquinian funerary art will then be examined. Finally, the significance of the griffin motif in Greece and in Southern Italy will be discussed.

B) Tarquinia - Location and History

Located approximately seventy-five kilometres north of Rome[1], Tarquinia, ancient Tarquinii, was one of the largest centres in Etruria. Through archaeological excavations, the ancient city, which is located three kilometres northeast from

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[1]Coarelli, F., Etruscan Cities, Cassell & Company LTD, London, 1975, p.181.

modern Tarquinia[2], has revealed vital information about its foundation and those who inhabited the area. Situated on the Marta river, Tarquinia's territory extended from the Mediterranean Sea to Lake Bolsena, and from the Migone river to the Arrone river[3] (ill. 1), covering an area approximately 398 square kilometres.

Excavations, which were first begun in 1829,[4] have revealed that this area was inhabited as early as 900 B.C., based on the grave finds from the Villanovan I period (900 B.C. to 750 B.C.).[5] The graves themselves were, at this time, most often pozzo graves[6] which were approximately 1.50 m. in diameter and 2 m. deep with a pozzetto approximately 60 cm. in diameter and 80 cm. deep located at the bottom of the pozzo.[7] The tomb itself was located in the pozzetto. According to Hencken,

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[2]Hencken, H., Tarquinia, Villanovans and Early Etruscans, Peabody Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, p.5.

[3]Strong, D., The Early Etruscans, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1968, p. 32.

[4]Hencken, p.19.

[5]ibid, p.433.

[6] A pozzo grave is a grave in the shape of a pit or a well. A pozzetto is a smaller pit or little well which is located at the bottom of the pozzo. Please also see ill. 2 to illustrate this point.

[7]Hencken, p.433.

> the simple pozzetti which contained the urns[8] for the cremated ashes were covered by slabs of stone. But in other cases, where the pozzetti were wider, the urns were contained in receptacles of nenfro[9] ...tombs with and without receptacles were mixed together in the cemetery. The only difference seemed to be that those with receptacles were, on the whole, richer...[10]

The grave goods from the cemeteries give us information as to the relative wealth of the deceased - the wealthier the deceased, the more elaborate or unique the grave goods. As time passed, the majority of the graves of Tarquinia possessed more elaborate funerary goods. This is a direct reflection of the increased wealth of the area, and is "closely connected with Tarquinia's new commercial role ... which developed as a result of the exploitation..of Etruria's vast mineral

---

[8] The urns are not made of stone, but instead are made from impasto (a rough, impurified clay which is brown in colour) in a biconical shape (the urns have a small base and neck and a very large belly and look as though they were made of two cones that had been joined at the widest point). The lids of the urns usually were bowls or saucers also made of impasto that had been inverted in order to serve as a lid. Sometimes a helmet, made of either bronze or clay, served as a lid. Please also see ill. 3.

[9] Nenfro is a type of soft volcanic stone which can easily be carved and utilized in many ways. It is often used to line graves and it is also a very popular material to use in the making of sarcophagi and decorative relief works.

[10] Hencken, p.21.

riches".[11]

During the Orientalizing period, 750 B.C. to 580 B.C., Tarquinia established contact with the east as a result of trade and the establishment of colonies in Italy by the Greeks. Tarquinia was located in an important geographical area - it was close to the sea, serviced by a navigable river, and was near two other important Etruscan centres, Vulci and Cerveteri (ill.1).[12] According to Michael Grant in his book The Etruscans, Tarquinia "had long been connected with Clusium by road...they also had close links with other Etruscan centres, since the central position of the city was convenient for undertaking commercial transactions along the land routes to all parts of Etruria".[13] There were also three ports which serviced this city: Martanum, Graviscae, and Rapinium.[14] The ports indicate that Tarquinia also had an important position in the Mediterranean trade route.[15] According to Jean Macintosh Turfa, who has done a study of the commerce and foeign affairs of the Etruscans, the Phoenicians[16] were

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[11]Coarelli, p.184.

[12]Coarelli, p.183.

[13]Grant, M., The Etruscans, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1980, p.131.

[14]ibid.

[15]Coarelli, p.184.

[16]The Phoenicians were important traders and navigators who inhabited Phoenicia, a country which is situated along the coast of Syria (including the towns of Sidon and Tyre). They established many colonies for trading purposes throughout the

trading with the Etruscans as early as the eighth century B.C. as evidenced by the "Oriental curiosities found in the tombs of the principes of Tarquinia, Veii and Vetulonia."[17] Egyptian goods found in Tarquinian tombs also indicate trade with the Phoenicians.[18] The trade relationship with the Phoenicians, which continued until the last quarter of the sixth century B.C.,[19] had a long lasting effect in the Etruscan world. It is thought that "the Orientalizing style of Etruscan art generally was inspired and dominated by the influx of Phoenician goods and the hybrid Egyptian or Assyrian motifs in their decoration."[20] The Phoenicians are also thought to have been responsible for the introduction of wine making to the Etruscans.[21] Yet the Phoenicians were not the only people with whom the Etruscans traded or had regular contact. It was also during the Orientalizing period that Greece established its colonies in Italy and began to trade with the Etruscans.

Pithekoussai was the first western colony of the Greeks.

Mediterranean, the most important of which was Carthage. Harvey, Sir P., The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1986, p.326.

[17]Turfa, J.M., "International Contacts: Commerce, Trade, and Foreign Affairs", Etruscan Life and Afterlife, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1986, p.66.

[18]ibid.

[19]ibid, p.67.

[20]ibid.

[21]ibid.

Founded in approximately 760 B.C., the site was chosen "for its proximity to Etruria and the river valley system of Latian and Campania".[22] Meanwhile, the Etruscans themselves had established trading centres at Pontecagnano, Cumae and Capua; settlements which are close in proximity to Pithekoussai (ill. 1a). It is likely that goods were first shipped from Pithekoussai to either Pontecagnano, Capua or Cumae and then transported by the Etruscans themselves overland to Etruria through the central part of Italy. Goods were also transported by ship up the coast of Italy to Etruria. Shortly after the establishment of Pithekoussai, Corinth sent a colony to Syracuse, Sicily, another strategic location.[23] These colonies were emporia: the settler families arrived afterwards in a second wave of emigration.[24] The presence of Greek colonies affected Etruria extensively. They were not only a source for new "exotic" products such as Corinthian pottery and Attic black-figured pottery, but they were also a source of new ideas. As a result of trade, the Etruscans adopted a writing system from the Greeks of Pithekoussai.[25]

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[22]ibid, p.69.

[23]ibid.

[24]ibid, p.69. An emporium, by definition, is a trading centre. Chosen specifically for its location and proximity to trade routes, the emporia usually became cities at a later date. Settlers and their families would arrive to the emporium only after it showed success as a commercial centre. See also Grant, M., The Rise of the Greeks, p.219-221.

[25]Turfa, p.70.

During the seventh century B.C., Tarquinia traded extensively with Corinth which is indicated by Corinthian pottery, commonly decorated with eastern motifs such as sphinxes, chimeras and other winged beasts, found in the tumulus tombs and chamber tombs of this time.[26]

Classical authors, spanning a time period from the sixth century B.C. to the mid-fourth century B.C. in Greece, and from the second century B.C. to the death of Augustus in A.D 14 in Italy, also mention the importance of Tarquinia as a trading centre during the seventh century B.C.[27] Since the Classical authors, such as Dionysius of Halicarnassus, were writing centuries after the actual events occurred, accuracy and motive must be questioned. Yet in combination with the archaeological evidence (such as Egyptian scarabs discovered in late eighth-century B.C. and seventh-century pozzo graves,[28] and the frequent discovery of Corinthian vases dating from the seventh century B.C.[29]), the later literary evidence also testifies to the importance of Tarquinia as a trading centre. The writings of Dionysius of Halicarnassus,

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[26]Coarelli, p.186.

[27] This has been further proven by two recent M.A. theses studying the ceramic material from Graviscae. This information was given to me by Dr. Helena Fracchia at my defense.

[28]Hencken, p. 539.

[29]ibid., p. 386.

a first-century B.C. historian[30], tell of trading practices between Tarquinia and Corinth. According to Dionysius,

> There was a certain Corinthian, Demaratus by name, ... who, having chosen to engage in commerce, sailed to Italy in a ship of his own with his own cargo...But when Corinth fell prey to sedition ... he sailed away from Corinth. And having from his continual intercourse with the Tyrrhenians, particularly at Tarquinii, which was a large and flourishing city at that tine, he built a house there...[31]

In other words, Demaratus, a merchant man who traded with the Etruscans, was forced to leave Corinth as a result of political unrest. He settled in Tarquinia along with a group of Greek artists where, according to the account of Dionysius, he married a noble woman and became father of the fifth king of Rome.[32] This story must be examined with caution: it must be remembered that Dionysius was a first-century B.C. historian and the story that he was retelling was set six hundred years earlier. Since the event had taken place so long ago, it is probable that details became obscured as time passed. Yet the focus of the story is not on the kingship of

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[30]Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Roman Antiquities II, trans. E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978.

[31]ibid, Book III.46.

[32]ibid.

Rome, but rather it is on the Corinthian origins of a man and his establishment in a foreign country. Archaeological excavations have shown that Corinth, along with other Greek city-states and other countries, traded with Tarquinia during the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. The story is one attempt of the Greeks to explain the trading phenomenae between Tarquinia and the Greek world.

From 600 to 480 B.C., Graviscae, one of Tarquinia's three ports (ill.1) was inhabited by Greeks.[33] Archaeological excavations have discovered that cults to the Greek Olympian gods and their Etruscan counterparts, specifically to Aphrodite/Turan, Hera/Uni, Demeter/Vei and Apollo, were established in sanctuaries in Graviscae.[34] Large amounts of Greek imported pottery (in particular, Attic red- and black-figured vases) from Attica and Ionia has also been found here.[35] Graviscae played an important role in relation to Tarquinia: not only was it a port city from which the Etruscans traded with the Mediterranean world, but it was also a welcoming area to which Greeks, particularly artisans, could come and live if their homeland was destroyed. As Turfa explains in her article, "upheavals in Persian-controlled Ionia [ca.499 B.C.] apparently caused many professional artisans to flee to territories with Greek populations already

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[33]Turfa, p.70.

[34]ibid.

[35]ibid, p.71.

catering to rich patrons".[36]

The presence of the Greeks at Graviscae and the increased flow of Greek goods into Tarquinia caused a rapid "hellenization" of the city throughout the first quarter of the sixth century B.C.[37] This "process included production of Etrusco-Corinthian pottery and stone sculpture"[38], as well as the development of architectural terracottas.[39] It is clear from the sanctuaries of Greek and Etruscan gods and from the production of Etrusco-Corinthian pottery along with the large quantities of Greek imported pottery from the mainland, that the Greeks had enormous influence, particularly in the sphere of red- and black-figured pottery, on the Etruscans at Tarquinia. It is equally clear that this was a result of the Greek inhabitants at Graviscae and at other ports along the trade routes.

Tarquinia, however, was not solely the product of Greek and Phoenician influence. It was a very powerful Etruscan city due to its strategic location in southern Etruria and its three ports. Tarquinia had a history of regional influence before its contact with the Greeks and Phoenicians[40], and it

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[36]ibid.

[37]ibid.

[38]ibid.

[39]ibid.

[40]Torelli, M., "History: Land and People", Etruscan Life and Afterlife, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1986, p.52.

continued to exert its influence on other Etruscan and Latin cities until the Roman conquest in 358-351 B.C. The Romans traditionally thought of Tarquinia as the birth place of the fifth king of Rome. According to legend, a son of Demaratus, the Corinthian merchant, moved to Rome in the later part of the seventh century B.C., won the favour of the King, and succeeded to the Roman throne after the death of the King. He was then known as Lucius Tarquinius Priscus, the elder Tarquinius.[41] So began the Etruscan rule of Rome until the Romans disposed of the monarchy in favour of a Republican system. On first glance, the legend of the Tarquinian rule of Rome seems to be a later Roman fabrication in order to explain the presence of a Republican system. Yet archaeological evidence concerning early Roman history supports the legend. Excavations in Rome have brought to light two bucchero vases and a fragment of an impasto vase with Etruscan inscriptions on them.[42] The inscription on the impasto fragment has been dated to the last quarter of the seventh century B.C..[43] In the last quarter of the seventh century, Rome was under Etruscan influence, and it has been "inferred from the legend, that Tarquinia, one of Etruria's leading cities, did play a decisive part in the spread of Etruscan civilization to Rome

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[41]Grant, M., The Etruscans, p.134. See also Diony. Hal., III. 46 foll.

[42]Pallottino, M., The Etruscans, Allen Lane, England, 1975, p. 96.

[43]ibid.

and Latium".[44] According to Mario Torelli,

> the dynasty of the Tarquins at Rome reflects the great interest the southern Etruscan cities had in controlling the plains of Latium, not only because of the economic importance of the Latin cities but also because of the need to guard the route to Campanian territory under Etruscan control.[45]

The history of Tarquinia during the fifth century B.C. is vague in the sense that there is very little literary or archaeological evidence to explain what happened during this time period. Archaeological evidence from Graviscae shows that "commercial exchange came to a standstill in this period"[46], and the funerary offerings of the tombs are "fewer and cheaper".[47] On the other hand, during the fourth century B.C., Tarquinia experienced an economic revival and became one of the most important Etruscan cities: it aided the Athenians with their "ill-conceived and finally disastrous expedition against Syracuse, the Etruscans' eternal enemy"[48] and Aulus Spurinna, a Tarquinian, "led an army of the twelve cities of Etruria against Rome."[49] From 358 B.C. to 351 B.C., Tarquinia

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[44]Coarelli, p. 187.

[45]Torelli, p.54.

[46]ibid, p.36.

[47]ibid.

[48]ibid, p.57.

[49]ibid, p.58. See also Livy, X, 4,5.

was actively engaging Rome in war, but was ultimately defeated.[50]

The brief historical synthesis provided above establishes the kinds of connections and cultural influences that both the Phoenicians and the Greeks may have brought to the Etruscans of Tarquinia. The actual physical archaeological evidence of the contacts, which is described in detail by Pallottino and Hencken, includes: the presence of Egyptian scarabs, proto-Corinthian and Corinthian painted pottery and fragments and vases made of faience.[51] It is clear that Tarquinian art and motifs are likely to have either been influenced by, or taken inspiration from, the art and motifs of those other geographic and ethnic regions. It is abundantly evident that Tarquinians had seen and knew all the characteristic Corinthian decorative motifs, especially the animal friezes so commonly painted on the Corinthian ceramic production beginning in ca. 750 B.C.. The griffin along with other exotic animals was a stock Corinthian motif. It is also known that the griffin is a common element in the art of Greece, Asia Minor and Tarquinia in this early period. Therefore, when examining the griffin motif in Tarquinia, one must keep in mind Tarquinia's history of contact with other cultures, particularly with the Greeks and Phoenicians. Tarquinia had especially strong ties with

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[50] ibid.

[51] Hencken, H., Tarquinia, Villanovans and Early Etruscans, 1968. Pallottino, M., "Tarquinia", Monumenti Antichi vol. XXXVI, Milano, 1937, col. 1-620.

Greek merchants and settlers: Greek colonies were established both at Pithekoussai and at Graviscae, a Tarquinia port. The griffin motif was used often in the funerary art of Asia Minor, and was a common element in the Orientalizing animal friezes that were characteristic of Corinthian black-figured art. Since Tarquinia enjoyed such close relations with the Greeks and Phoenicians, it might be assumed by analogy that the significance of the griffin motif in Greece and in Asia Minor is the same as that in Tarquinia. This assumption must, however, be tested.

II The Griffin Motif in Asia Minor and Tarquinia

A) History and Significance in Asia Minor

Little is known about the griffin motif as very few scholars have studied it in detail and fewer scholars are willing to discuss its significance as a single figure, let alone as a part of a pictorial group. The griffin is a creature which is composed of the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion.[52] The motif is thought to have originated in "Syria in the second millennium BC... [and] was known throughout the Near East, including Mesopotamia, and in Greece by the fourteenth century BC",[53] "[A]pparently the creature had some religious significance, being shown...in funerary art. It may have been magically protective, but its precise associations and functions are unknown."[54]

B) Description

In the Near Eastern examples, the griffin is shown with "a crested head, while the Greek is usually shown with a row of spiral curls forming a mane. Often...the creature has large donkey ears...the beak is often parted to show the curling tongue"[55]. A thirteenth-century B.C ivory inlay (from

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[52]Grimal, P., The Dictionary of Classical Mythology, trans. A.R. Maxwell-Hyslop, Blackwell Reference, USA, 1986, p. 175.

[53]Black, P. and A. Green, Gods, Demons and Symbols of Ancient Mesopotamia: An Illustrated Dictionary, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1992, p.101.

[54]ibid.

[55]ibid.

Megiddo)[56] shows a common depiction of an eastern griffin (ill. 4). Though in a reclining posture, the wings of the griffin are fully spread out as if it were a wild animal displaying itself during either a courtship ritual or an attack on its territory. The griffin is looking upwards with its head held high and its beak closed. On top of its forehead there is a crest of three plate like feathers which are decorated with a horizontal incised line. The wings consist of three rows of sharp angular plate like feathers above which lies a single row of curls (similar to volute ends). The main body is that of a big cat, probably a lion, whose paws and tail are clearly visible in the relief. It is difficult to determine the significance of this griffin, and it has been suggested that perhaps that in this case (ill. 4), it is "the embodiment of a mysterious power, perhaps a personification of death."[57]

C) The Griffin in Tarquinia

The griffin motif is found throughout Etruria in vase painting, bronze sculpture (specifically, griffin heads are used as cauldron attachments for either decorative or utilitarian purposes), and in relief work. At Poggio Civitate, also known as Murlo, many representations of griffins have been found in connection with the main building

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[56]Frankfort, H., The Art and Architecture of the Ancient Orient, Penguin Books, Baltimore, Maryland, 1969, p. 154.

[57]ibid.

complex of the site. This complex, which was constructed ca. 620 B.C. and destroyed ca. 520 B.C.,[58] has been identified as both sacred and secular, in that it was a place where both religious and civic functions could be performed.[59] From the vast numbers of votive deposits (consisting of terracotta plaques) found here adorned with the assembly of the gods, it has been determined that the building was a place of worship for the cults of Tin(ia)/Zeus, Uni/Hera, and Minerva/Athena.[60] In Ficana, another Etruscan site, a votive deposit has been discovered that included a banquet set decorated with griffins.[61] The find, which has been dated to the second half of the seventh century, consists of four griffin decorated holmoi, which were used for wine mixing, and several richly decorated vases, chalices, and other wine containers.[62] Since this find was a part of a votive deposit, it was obviously dedicated to a god. Since it was buried, it is possible that the find was dedicated to Tin(ia), the main god of the Etruscan pantheon who performed many functions. Tin(ia) was

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[58]Phillips Jr., K.M., "Bryn Mawr College Excavations in Tuscany", AJA 75, The Journal of the Archaeological Institute of America, 1971, p. 259.

[59]Edlund,I.E.M., The Gods and the Place, Stockholm, 1987.

[60]Gantz, T., "Divine Triads on an Archaic Etruscan Frieze Plaque from Poggio Civitate", Studi Etruschi vol. XXXIX (Serie II), Firenze, 1971, p.24.

[61]Case e palazzi d'Etruria, Regione Toscana Electa, Italia, 1985, p.168.

[62]ibid.

not only a sky god, but he was also the god of boundaries. As the god of boundaries, it is likely that he was concerned not only with physical boundaries (such as the beginning and ending of a city's territory), but also with spiritual boundaries (such as the boundary between life and death). Since the votive deposit was buried, I believe it was dedicated to Tin(ia), god of boundaries, and therefore connected with the passage from the realm of the living to that of the dead.

In Tarquinia, I will concentrate on the griffin which appears often on nenfro stelae found in Tarquinian tombs. When examining the griffin motif in Tarquinia, a brief review of Tarquinia's contacts may be helpful. As previously mentioned, the griffin motif was used often in the funerary art of the Near East, and it was a common Oriental animal frieze that was employed by the Corinthians in their black-figured art. My working hypothesis is that the use of the griffin motif at Tarquinia is analogous to its significance in the art of Greece and Asia Minor.

The appearance of the Etruscan griffin varies from one region to another and from medium to another. For that reason, I have decided to limit this investigation of the Etruscan griffin to Tarquinia and I have decided to look at the depiction of the griffin specifically in relief work.

D) Nenfro Stelae - description and function

The nenfro stelae of Tarquinia are unique in Etruria.

They have been found exclusively in the cemetery of Tarquinia and nowhere else. They are made of large rectangular slabs of nenfro, a type of volcanic stone, and are richly decorated with carvings of an "oriental" nature. By 1937, there had been 47 nenfro slabs discovered.[63] Although the stelae are largely fragmentary, the majority of the discovered slabs are 2m long, 1m tall and 0.22m thick.[64] According to Pallottino, there are three different types of nenfro stelae. The first consists of either a long zig-zag design or a relief with a zig-zag design (ill.5). The second type has either two smooth or decorated strips with a zig-zag design and is separated lengthwise by various mouldings (ill. 6). The third type consists of three smooth or decorated strips with a zig-zag design and is separated lengthwise by two mouldings and is encased on the short sides by two friezes (ill. 7).[65]

There are many theories as to the function of the stelae. Pallottino believes that they were used, in the context of the tomb decoration, to decorate the beams of wood tiles or, in tumulus tombs, were used as imitation wood ceilings. He also believes that they were even used as part of the door of the tomb (either lying above the door or acting as a false door)

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[63]Pallottino, M., Monumenti Antichi XXXVI, 1937, col.198 - 203.

[64] Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Notizie degli Scavi di Antichita, series 6 vol. 6, 1930, p.165.

[65]Pallotino, Monumenti Antichi, col. 197 - 206. The italian text was translated by Dr. Helena Fracchia.

and, in trench tombs, could also be used as the roof (ill. 8).[66] E. Richardson and I. Jucker believe that the slabs served as doors in the tombs and that their purpose is similar to that served by the painted doors in later Tarquinian tombs.[67] This debate about function and use of the stelae is fuelled by the fact that the slabs were found on the floors of the tombs.[68] Whether used as a door or a roof or even just as a decorative relief, one must not forget the context in which these slabs were discovered. They are used only in Tarquinia and they are found in the tombs.

E) Literary Evidence

There is no surviving Etruscan literary evidence which states the significance of the griffin motif in Etruria. It is possible that there were some Etruscan works that had either mentioned the purpose of the griffin or what it had represented, but unfortunately none have survived. Therefore, in order to determine the significance of the motif, one must rely not only on artifacts and the placement of the motif on those artifacts, but also on analogy with other cultures which have the same motif. Religion and religious beliefs must also be discussed.

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[66] ibid.

[67] Richardson, E., The Etruscans Their Art and Civilization University of Chicago Press, 1964. Jucker, I., Italy of the Etruscans, The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, 1991.

[68] Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Notizie degli Scavi di Antichita, series 6, vol. 6, p.116.

F) Religion in Etruria

What is known about Etruscan religious beliefs is derived from the archaeological evidence that is left behind in tombs and in sanctuaries. As previously mentioned, there is no Etruscan literary evidence which describes rituals for marriage, death or appeasement of the gods. Through archaeology, it has been determined that the Etruscan pantheon consists of sky gods, water gods, nature and birth gods, war gods, earth gods, underworld gods, healing gods and work gods.[69] In spite of what has been derived from archaeology, the origin of the Etruscan religion is unknown.[70]

Later Roman and Greek authors, such as Pliny, Seneca, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, discuss Etruscan religion in their works, but this literary evidence must be used with caution. By the time of Seneca (the first century A.D.),[71] Etruscan religion had certainly changed and had become hellenized and, therefore, it is difficult to ascertain which gods were in the original pantheon and how they functioned. Seneca in his Naturales Quaestiones explains that the Etruscan Tin(ia) was exactly like the Roman Jupiter, and can be described as fate, cause of causes, and the creator of all things:

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[69]Pfiffig, A., Religio Etrusca, Akademische Druck u. Verlagsanstalt, Graz-Austria, 1975.

[70]Pallotino, M., The Etruscans, Allen Lane, London, 1975, p.138-152.

[71]The Oxford Classical Dictionary, ed. N.G.L. Hammond and H.H. Scullard, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1989, p.976.

> They recognized the same Jupiter we do, the controller and guardian of the universe, the mind and spirit of the world, the lord and artificer of this creation. Any name for him is suitable...he himself is all that you see, infused throughout all his parts, sustaining both himself and his own. The Etruscans had the same concept..."[72]

On careful examination, it appears that, by the time of Seneca, the Etruscan god Tin(ia) no longer functions as an Etruscan deity, but is simply another name for Jupiter.

Etruscan religion was essentially a pantheatic religion consisting of many gods and goddesses, many of which can be found on the bronze liver of Piacenza.[73] The main god of the pantheon was Tin(ia), a sky god who is often equated with Zeus and Jupiter. His attributes, the thunderbolt and the sceptre, are reminiscent of those carried by the Greek and Roman sky gods. Unlike his Greek and Roman counterparts, Tin(ia) throws three different kinds of thunderbolts: the first is a warning, the second causes some minimal damage, and the third

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[72]Seneca, Naturales Quaestiones, trans. T.H. Corcoran, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1971, Bk. II, 45. 1-3.

[73]The bronze liver is a model of a sheep's liver which was used by an Etruscan haruspex ca. 100 B.C. It has forty-two Etruscan inscriptions on it, thus giving us the names of the early Etruscan gods. No other model liver with inscriptions has yet been discovered in Italy. The liver of a sacrificed animal was consulted in order to discover the intent of the gods or how to appease them. Van Der Meer, L.B., The Bronze Liver of Piacenza, J.C. Gieben, Amsterdam, 1987, p. 3.

is extremely destructive.[74] Tin(ia) was originally the consort of a mother goddess who gradually supplanted her worship much like the origins of the worship of Zeus in Greece.[75] Tin(ia) was not only a sky god in the Etruscan pantheon. He was the custodian of the earth, and god of fields and boundaries, both physical and spiritual.[76] Anyone who violated the boundaries was subject to the punishment of Tin(ia).[77] It is not impossible to think of Tin(ia), a god of boundaries, as a god of the dead, or one who guards the boundary between life and death. It is not known when or where the cult of Tin(ia) began; however, by the end of the sixth century B.C., his worship had spread throughout Etruria.[78] There was a cult of Tin(ia) in Tarquinia by the end of the sixth century B.C. This is known from an Attic red-figured kylix by Oltos,(late sixth-century B.C.), which is inscribed "to the sons of Tin", who are also known as the Dioskouroi.[79] This is very important as "it not only attests

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[74]Pfiffig, p.232 - 234.

[75]Pfiffig, p. 231-234.

[76]Enciclopedia dell'Arte Antica Classica e Orientale, Enciclopedia Italiana, Roma, 1958, p.868. Henceforth abbreviated to EAA.

[77]ibid.

[78]Pfiffig, p. 233.

[79]EAA, p.868. The Dioskouroi are also considered chthonic gods. Although they are the sons of Zeus, Castor is mortal, while Polydeuces is immortal. When Castor died, Polydeuces decided to share his immortality with his brother so that they would not be separated. Burkert, p. 212.

to the cult of Tin, but also to a parallel of the Etruscan to the Greek religions."[80] Associating Tin(ia) with the Dioskouroi further strengthens his chthonic aspects.

There are, however, distinct Greek imported gods in the Etruscan pantheon, specifically Apollo and Artemis, known in Etruscan as Aplu and Aritimi. It is supposed by A. Pfiffig that the cult of Apollo came to Etruria through trade and by the establishment of Greek sanctuaries at Etruscan trade centres, such as Graviscae.[81] During excavations that were begun in 1969, a temple complex measuring 30m x 20m was found between the southern edge of the city and the sea.[82] Many votive offerings were found dedicated to either Apollo or Hera.[83] Just as in the Greek tradition, after Apollo was introduced into the pantheon, he began to assimilate certain aspects of Tin(ia), the head sky god.[84] Other gods were present in their pantheon, but, as before mentioned, religious practice varied distinctly from region to region and the gods worshipped in each region varied.[85]

It is known that the Etruscans followed the etrusca

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[80]ibid.

[81]Pfiffig, p.253.

[82]Pfiffig, p.253.

[83]ibid.

[84]EAA, p.463 - 473.

[85]For more information on Etruscan religion see also A. Pfiffig's Religio Etrusca.

disciplina, a closely followed religious doctrine which included such rites as boundary marking and augury. These rites were later adopted by the Romans and were incorporated into their own religious beliefs.[86] They also had oracles which were quite different from the oracles of Greece. The Etruscan oracle consisted of inscribed bronze or wooden tablet pieces that were either hung on a string and allowed to fall in a random pattern or were thrown in a pot and drawn at random.[87] The interpretation of the oracle was the will of the god.

There was, nevertheless, a common belief held by all Etruscans - they believed in an afterlife. This belief is known not through writing, but from the tombs found throughout Etruria. The tombs were furnished for life after death - furniture, food, and offerings are all present in the tombs. When cremation was practised in Etruria, the "spirits of the dead were kept 'alive' or given a human form for their trip to the underworld by being placed in urns which had human features".[88] Later, banquet scenes, athletic contests, hunting scenes and dancing scenes are all a part of the painted funerary decoration of the tombs - these scenes are very reminiscent of the painted scenes found in Egyptian tombs

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[86]Bonfante, L., "Daily Life and Afterlife", Etruscan Life and Afterlife, p.264.

[87]Pfiffig, p.153 - 155.

[88]ibid, p.268.

depicting life after death for the Pharaohs and other dignitaries. Likewise, the presence of the funerary offerings and of furniture suggests that the Etruscans wanted their dead to be comfortable in the afterlife, and in some cases where the tomb is a recreation of a house, wanted the dead to have all of the comforts of home in the other world. It is clear that, although the exact Etruscan concept of life after death is not known, they did believe in an afterlife.

G) Griffin in Context

As before mentioned, nenfro stelae are exclusive to Tarquinia. Archaeological excavation has revealed numerous stelae from the tombs, the majority of which are fragmentary.[89] During the course of my research, I have uncovered sixteen photographs of Tarquinian nenfro stelae. Of these, five are very fragmentary and have very little decorative relief work remaining. Five of the stelae have a griffin or griffins as an easily identifiable motif, although the photographic reproductions are relatively poor. Another three stelae have possible griffin motifs. In other words, there are some stelae that have motifs with lions bodies and wings but their heads are missing, or the stelae are so badly damaged that it is impossible to make a positive identification of the figure. The remaining stelae do not have a griffin as part of their decorative repertoire, but it

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[89] Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Notizie degli Scavi di Antichita, series 6, vol. 6, p.114-170.

must be remembered that these stelae are also fragmentary.[90]

Of the five stelae which do include a griffin as a motif, I have chosen to discuss two which are fairly well preserved, well photographed, and are good examples of the types of stelae which are found in the tombs in Tarquinia. The first stele I will examine measures approximately 2 m. long, 1 m. high and 0.22 m. in depth and is dated to the late seventh century B.C. (ill. 7).[91] It consists of three vertical strips with elaborate relief carving, each of which is separated by two mouldings. A large horizontal strip, also with elaborate carving runs along the bottom of the slab. Beginning in the upper left hand corner, one sees a centaur carrying a large tree. He is surrounded by a border of a guilloche pattern. Beneath him is a scene consisting of two men walking towards the right with one man walking ahead of the other. The first gentleman appears to have his hands either tied behind his back or holding a rope behind him. The second man follows closely carrying an object in his right hand and placing his left hand on the man in front.

Moving towards the right, we find a vertical panel of two mouldings, which are either spaces for the wood beams of the

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[90]Photographic reproductions of the sixteen nenfro slabs are found in Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Notizie degli Scavi di Antichita, series 6, vol. 6, 1930, p. 114 - 170 and in Monumenti Antichi, vol.XXXVI, 1937, col.199 - 204.

[91] Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Notizie degli Scavi di Antichi, p.165.

tomb's roof or an imitation of a wooden roof. Beside the mouldings stands the second vertical panel of sculpture. In the upper half there is a panther (ill. 7). He is positioned with his body moving towards the left while his head is turned frontally to face the viewer. The panther is well carved in low relief - details such as the musculature of the body and the almond shape of the eyes is clearly visible. The curved tail is held upright and neatly fills in the space between the panther's back and the border of the square. The panther is surrounded by a guilloche border like that of the first panel.

Below the panther, a fleeing gorgon is depicted (ill. 7).[92] The gorgon, which has the body of a woman and the wings of a bird, looks behind her to the scene of the two men in the first panel. She is shown in a kneeling position which is indicative of flight in this time period. Her wings, which are clearly carved with flight feathers indicated, are extended and curved also indicating flight. Her facial features and musculature are not well preserved. The gorgon is also surrounded on all four sides by a guilloche patterned border.

Next one sees the second vertical panel with two mouldings which indicate the spaces for wooden beams. Beside that there stands the third vertical panel with carved

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[92] Atti della Reale Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Notizie degli Scavi di Antichi, p.166. The Notizie degli Scavi makes the identification of this creature as a gorgon very clear.

decoration. The upper half contains a ram. The ram is carved in low relief with musculature and facial features still visible. He is positioned facing and moving towards the left of the stele. He is also surrounded by a guilloche border. Beneath stands another centaur, a mirror of the one which is located in the upper left hand corner. Like the first centaur, he carries a tree as he moves towards the left. He clearly consists of the body of a man to which the body of a horse has been attached to his back. Facial features have been worn away, but one can still see some of the musculature in the centaur's hind legs. Again, the centaur is surrounded by a border in the guilloche pattern.

Beneath these vertical panel lies one large horizontal panel. Moving from right to left (ill. 7), we see a person, a griffin, a man riding a horse, two sphinxes in a heraldic pose, another rider and finally another griffin. It is likely that another person was originally positioned behind the second griffin, but that corner of the stele has been lost. Beginning on the right, the first figure is a human, possibly a female, who is standing in profile facing left. Facial features which are still distinguishable show that the figure is beardless, has almond shaped eyes, a large pointed nose , rounded cheeks, an archaic smile, and wig-like hair. The figure is possibly a female as there is no defined musculature visible, and it appears to be wearing a chiton. The figure is quite static as it makes no physical movement. A griffin

stands in front of the figure. The griffin, like its oriental and Greek counterparts, consists of the body of a lion and the head and wings of an eagle. Its sharp-beaked mouth is opened wide, but the tongue is not visible. Its pointed ears lie flat against the head resting just above its almond shaped eyes. Its feline body is clearly defined in low relief, and its tail curves above its back like a volute. The detailed wings curve upwards like those belonging to the gorgon. The griffin appears to be moving forwards towards the centre of the panel.

Ahead of the griffin stands a rider on a horse. The rider and the horse have sustained considerable damage, and therefore artistic details are not clear. The head and reins of the horse are unmistakable, but the rider and the body of the horse are not clear. In front of the horse stands a sphinx. The sphinx consists of the body of a lion, the wings of an eagle and the head of a woman. Its body and wings are a duplicate of those possessed by the griffin which was already described. The only difference between the two creatures is that the sphinx has the head of a woman. The face is not clearly defined - the outline of the nose, neck and hair are the only clear features.

In front of the sphinx stands another sphinx which is so similar to the first that it could be a mirror image of it. The two sphinxes are facing each other with their noses touching. The second sphinx (that which is facing right), is

better preserved than the first one. The outline of the face is much clearer, and some facial features, such as the almond shaped eyes, are better distinguished. The body and the wings are similar to those possessed by the other sphinx and the first griffin.

A rider on a horse stands behind the second sphinx. This rider and horse are better preserved than the pair on the right side of the stelae. The mane, eyes and bit of the horse are visible, along some musculature on the hind part of the horse. The rider, however, does not possess any distinguishable features. The legs of the horse are missing.

A second griffin (ill. 7) completes the frieze on this portion of the stelae. Like the first griffin, he has a large gaping sharp-beaked mouth, almond shaped eyes, a lion's body and the wings of an eagle. There are, however, some differences. First, the pointed ears of this griffin do not lie flat against the head. They are upright. Second, the wings are of an entirely different shape. They are outstretched and held straight back -they do not curve upwards like the wings of the first griffin and the sphinxes. The straight wings are very reminiscent of the wings of the griffin from Meggido (ill. 4).

It is the significance of the griffin motif that concerns me. One must examine all elements of this stele in order to determine what it symbolizes. The centaurs (ill. 7) are Greek mythological creatures who lived in the mountains and in the

woods and were prone to acts of violence, especially when they were intoxicated (such as the battle of the Lapiths and Centaurs).[93] They frequently appeared in the Greek myths, especially those which involved Heracles (such as the Erymanthian boar).

The sphinx functions not only as an apotropaic figure (one that frightens away evil spirts), but also as "the protector of the dead and guardian of the tomb"[94]. This concept is derived from Egyptian and earlier Mesopotamian art (from 3000 B.C. through to 600 B.C.[95]) in which the sphinx is a common motif. In Mesopotamia, sculptures of the sphinx were used as gateway guardians as well as palatial guardians.[96] Like the iconography of many motifs, that of the sphinx changes over time and is dependent on its environment. Therefore, what was once a guardian of the living (guarding the palaces and the gateways of the mortal world) becomes a guardian and protector of the dead as it is prominently placed on funerary art - specifically the nenfro stelae.

The gorgon is another apotropaic figure. In Greek myth, the gorgon, Medusa, was once a beautiful woman who was turned

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[93]Grimal, p.94-95.

[94]Ginge, B., "Etruscan Mortuary Symbolism: Oriental influences on Polychrome Group Ceramics", Die Welt der Etrusker, 1990, p.235.

[95]Black, p. 51.

[96]ibid.

into a hideous monster by Athena. Once the transformation occurred, anyone who looked at Medusa turned to stone.[97] It is therefore natural that the gorgon would be used to frighten evil spirits in various artistic realms. Frequently used in the Greek world as a protective amulet carved on furniture and ornaments or adorning the walls of homes and temples[98], it was also used in Tarquinia as part of funerary decoration. By placing the gorgon as the central figure of the nenfro stele, its function as a protective guardian is emphasized. It now guards the dead rather than the living from evil spirits.

The panther, along with lions and winged lions, is another creature who protects people from evil. It is an animal admired not only for its beauty, but also for its ferocity and skill in attack. It is therefore natural that it was used as a guardian figure, frightening evil and protecting the dead. This guardian aspect is, in this case, emphasized as the panther is in a definite funerary context. It should also be mentioned that, in the Greek world, the panther was associated with the god Dionysus - its beauty and ferocity/ frenzy were admired by the god and his followers, and it was one of the animals into which Dionysus was able to be transformed.[99]

The ram (ill.7) does not have a specific iconography.

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[97]Harvey, p. 190.

[98]ibid.

[99]Grimal, p. 140.

It could be a representation of a sacrificial animal, or of a favourite hunted animal, or it could have been used as a decorative element. It is possible that the ram was representative of fertility. It is likely that the ram at one time had had a specific meaning in Tarquinia, but unfortunately there is no surviving literary evidence which supports this view. The two young men in the lower left hand corner of the stelae also have no specific iconography. Although one of the men appears to have his hands tied behind his back, it is difficult to say whether or not he is a prisoner. This scene is clearly a narrative, but it is not known what exactly it is trying to convey.

The riders and horses are not uncommon in Etruscan iconography. At Murlo, there are many relief plaques which show riders and horses participating in a race (this is usually referred to as funerary games). It must also be remembered that horses, riders and funerary games are very common in Greek iconography. The riders on this stele, however, are not participating in a race. Instead, the movement of the horses indicate that they are participants in a procession. It is possible that they are meant to symbolize the funerary games of the deceased, or the procession of the soul from the mortal realm to the immortal realm.

The griffins are the final motif on this stele. As there is no literary evidence which states the significance of the motif, its significance must be ascertained by its relation to

other motifs. In this case, the motifs on the stele are generally concerned with the protection and guardianship of the dead. The panther, sphinxes and gorgon all protect the tomb from evil spirits and serve as guardians of the dead. Like the sphinx, gorgon and panther, the griffin is a part of the "Orientalizing" motifs, and as previously mentioned, the griffin in Mesopotamian art had religious significance and may have also been magically protective. Since the nenfro stele is a part of the funerary art of Tarquinia, and since the griffin is shown on the stele along with many other motifs the significance of which is to protect and guard the dead, the significance of the griffin motif must also be to protect and guard the dead.

The next stele (ill.9) has been dated to the third quarter of the sixth century B.C.. It is 0.7 m. high and 0.56 m. wide.[100] The upper left hand corner contains a griffin. He has a large gaping sharp-beaked mouth, almond shaped eyes, large pointed erect ears, sickle shaped curved wings, and a large lion's body. The shape of the head is very similar to the other griffins on the first stele (ill.7). There is a small band of slanted lines above and below the griffin. Below the griffin is a kneeling (or running) warrior (ill.9) who is looking straight ahead (towards the right) as he flees. He appears to be drawing his sword from its sheath, anticipating a battle. He is clearly outlined in low relief,

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[100] Jucker, p.289.

but definition of musculature is not present. It is possible that it was later added in another medium such as paint. His almond shaped eye, large nose, and fingers are made by incision. A small band of slanted lines separates the warrior from the winged panther below him. The panther has a frontal head while its body is turned towards the right. Its wing has incised feathers (not as numerous as those on the griffin's wing) and is curved upwards in a sickle-shape. The rest of the panther's body is missing.

There is a vertical panel of mouldings, of which four remain, that separates the first decorated panel from the second one. In the upper right hand corner (ill. 9), facing left, there is a siren, a creature which consists of the head of a woman and the body of a bird. Her female head is clearly visible along with the upper part of her bird body. A portion of her wing also remains. It appears as though the wing did not curve upwards like those of the griffin and panther, but rather rested at her side as a regular bird's wing rests. Her tail is missing. A small band of slanted lines separates the siren from the winged lion beneath her. The lion, who also faces left, has a clearly defined face and body. His almond shaped eye, open mouth and hanging tongue are visible. His muzzle is emphasized by a curved incised line - thus also adding expression to the face. Looking at the body, the legs are well defined, and the beginning of a wing is also noted. The remaining parts of the wing and body are missing. Once

again, there is a band of slanted lines which separates the winged lion from the animal below. The final animal on this stelae is a waterfowl. It has a very long curved neck, small head and close mouthed beak - it is reminiscent of a swan. A part of its wing can also be seen, but it is not very clear.

Again, in order to properly determine the significance of the griffin motif, the significance of the other motifs found on this stelae (ill.9) must be examined. The winged panther and the lion are both apotropaic figures meant to frighten evil and protect the living. They are animals admired not only for beauty, but also for their ferocity and skill in attack. Naturally they are used as guardian figures, frightening evil and protecting the dead. This guardian aspect is emphasized as the panther and lion are in a definite funerary context.

The siren, which consists of the body of a bird and the head of a woman, is an interesting motif. In mythology, the sirens lured sailors to their deaths by singing beautiful songs. Unable to resist, the sailors would follow the voices, crash their vessels on the rocks and drown. Because of their beautiful songs, the sirens were later thought to have sung for those who resided in the Blessed Islands, and are therefore often depicted in funerary art such as reliefs and sarcophagi.[101] Thus it is not surprising that the siren appears as one of the motifs on this stele (ill. 9). Here,

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[101]Grimal, p.422.

the siren probably is symbolic of the singer in the Blessed Island rather than the temptress to a watery grave. On the other hand, if the deceased happened to drown, then the siren is also an appropriate symbol as the one who took the deceased from the mortal world. In either case, the siren is associated with death.

The warrior could represent many things. It could be a representation of the deceased and his occupation, or it could represent an unknown hero on a particular journey. The iconographic possibilities are numerous. The waterfowl also has an uncertain iconography. The bird could be a favourite of the deceased, or it could be used as merely a decorative element. It is possible that the waterfowl represented fertility. The exact connotations are unknown.

The significance of the griffin motif is, once again, that of a protector and guardian of the dead. This is determined by its funerary context and its association with the lion, winged panther and siren - motifs which are all concerned with death.

III The Griffin Motif in the Greek World

A) Entry Into the Greek World

It is during the Orientalizing period that the griffin motif first appears in the Greek world. During this time, there is a "sudden influx of wild beasts and imaginary monsters: gorgons, sphinxes, griffins, sirens, cruel-beaked powerful creatures of nightmare, savaging cattle or warriors with equal ferocity".[102] This is to be expected as contacts between Greece and the Near East were established during the colonization movement of the eighth century B.C.[103] During the seventh century, these contacts were regularized on a commercial level and Eastern goods flooded the Greek world.[104] Thus, as a result of trade contacts, the Greek world soon became home to the griffin motif.

B) Literary Evidence

What is very interesting about the griffin is the lack of literary evidence which states its significance. One of the earliest references to the griffin can be found in the play Prometheus Bound by Aeschylus, a fifth-century playwright. According to Aeschylus, the griffins were "the sharped-beaked hounds of Zeus that bark not...who dwell about the flood of

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[102]Green, P., A Concise History of Ancient Greece to the Close of the Classical Era, Thames and Hudson, Great Britain, 1987, p. 50.

[103]Biers, W.R., The Archaeology of Greece: An Introduction, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1988, p.126.

[104]ibid.

Pluto's stream that flows with gold".[105] Several comments can be made about this particular passage. First, Aeschylus' plays were being commissioned and performed for an important religious festival - the Great Dionysia, which was "introduced in Athens in the sixth century"[106] as a celebration of the god Dionysus, the god of wine, revelry and theatre.[107] Thus, a subtle connection between Dionysus and griffins can tentatively be established. Aeschylus, however, does not state that the griffins are associated with Dionysus; instead, he calls them the "hounds of Zeus".[108] The association between the griffin and Zeus is puzzling - there are no other literary works which support this claim and it is difficult to see a connection between Zeus, the father of the gods, and the griffin. It is likely that Aeschylus was referring to a lost myth which provided the literary link between the creature and Zeus. Yet, there is another way to examine this passage with regards to Zeus. In Prometheus Bound, Zeus is portrayed as a cruel tyrant, and it is possible that the harsh description of the griffins reflect the tyrannical Zeus. It is also significant that Aeschylus mentions that the griffins "dwell

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[105]Aeschylus, "Prometheus Bound", Aeschylus I, trans. H.W. Smyth, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1988, ln. 803-806.

[106]Burkert, W., Greek Religion trans. J. Raffan, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985, p.163.

[107]Grimal, p. 140.

[108]Aeschylus, ln. 803.

about...Pluto's stream".[109] Pluto is another name for Hades, the god of the Underworld, and ruler of the riches of the earth. The griffins are, therefore, also being linked with the underworld as they guard the treasure of the Underworld. Furthermore, Aeschylus specifically describes the griffins as being from the East. In order to reach the land where the griffins dwell, Io must "cross the channel which divides Europe from Asia...cross by the edge of the foaming sea...to Gorgona to the flat stretches of Kisthene's country."[110] The Eastern origins of the griffin coincide with the Eastern origins of both Apollo and Dionysus, gods which are associated not only with death and the afterlife, but also with Eastern or Northern origins which will be discussed later.

Although literary evidence linking Zeus with the griffin is rare, there is archaeological evidence connecting the griffin with Zeus. At Olympia, the sanctuary and oracle of Zeus, a trio of bronze griffin heads dating from mid seventh century has been discovered. These protomes (ill. 10), although made from bronze, are significant as they are also from the same time period as the griffin reliefs from Tarquinia. Like the griffins on the Tarquinian stelae (ill. 7 and ill.9), these three heads have gaping sharp-beaked mouths, slanted almond-shaped eyes, and large pointed ears. A large metal knob rests on the middle of the forehead on two

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[109]ibid., ln. 806.

[110]ibid, ll. 791-794.

of the three protomes. This knob is reminiscent of the crown of feathers noted on the griffin from Megiddo (ill. 4). It has been determined that these heads originally decorated a large cauldron that was dedicated at Olympia, but it is not known who commissioned it, or the reason why it was dedicated.[111] It is clear that the protomes were the work of a single artist, although his origins have not been determined (however, it has been suggested that the protomes were made in a Corinthian workshop).[112] The fact that these griffins were found in the sanctuary of Zeus is important - it was brought to the sanctuary as a gift to Zeus. As the father of the gods, Zeus had a very important role; he was a protective father figure, a just and fair ruler, and a tyrant. He was also chthonic Zeus and as such he was associated with death. Since the griffins were a part of a gift to Zeus, it is likely that they are a reflection of Zeus' protective and chthonic aspects. A bronze plaque, dating from the late seventh century, of a mother griffin and her young has also been found at Olympia (ill. 11). Like the protomes (ill. 10), this griffin has long, pointed ears, almond shaped eyes, an open sharp-beaked mouth, a curling tongue, a knob on her forehead, the wings of an eagle and the body of a lion. At the base of her hind leg crouches a baby griffin which is a miniature of

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[111]Mattusch, C.C., "A Trio of Griffins from Olympia", Hesperia vol.59: no.3, 1990, p.549.

[112]ibid., p.551.

the larger griffin. The plaque, originally a blazon of a wooden shield,[113] clearly demonstrates the protective nature of the griffin. It is likely that the motif, as an apotropaic creature, reflects the protective nature of Zeus in his sanctuary and his ability to frighten away unwelcome spirits. The griffin reflects Zeus' chthonic aspects as well.

It is also likely that the griffin motif found here at Olympia is a reflection of the funerary origins of the Olympic games. There has been a lot of debate surrounding the origin of the games in the early part of this century. There have been scholars who have thought that the games were nothing more than pastimes to "cheer up" the survivors.[114] Others are of the view that the "athletic feats were performed, not solely to cheer the spirits of the performers, but as an act of worship, to 'honour and appease' the spirit of a hero."[115] Still there are others who have thought that the games originated in the rituals that surrounded the death and birth of the new year, which can be seen in the stories of the death of Oinomaos and the rise of Pelops (an old king who is conquered and surpassed by a new king).[116] Whether the games were established in order to celebrate the passing of a friend

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[113]Green, p. 55.

[114]Cornford, F.M., "Origin of the Olympic Games",Themis, J.E. Harrison, University Press, Cambridge, 1912, p.212.

[115]ibid, p.213.

[116]ibid, p.213 - 215.

(which marks the boundary between life and death), or to honour a dead hero (another boundary between life and death), or to mark the ritual passing of a year (crossing a ritual boundary from the old year to the new one), it is clear that the games are funerary in their origin. The crossing of boundaries further strengthens the connection of the games to the chthonic aspect of Zeus. The fact that tripods were among the prizes won at the games are therefore associated not with winning but with death. The fact that the games are held at the sanctuary of Zeus is very important as it further strengthens the connection of Zeus with death, and therefore the griffin motif with Zeus and death.

Herodotus, a fifth century historian, mentions griffins three times in his Histories stating that they are gold guarding and that they live in the northern regions.[117] He also mentions Aristeas, a poet who first wrote about the griffins. Herodotus states " Aristeas also...says in the course of his poem that rapt in Apolline fury he went as far as the Issedones. Above them dwelt the Arimaspi, men with one eye; still further, the gold-guarding Griffins; and beyond these, the Hyperboreans".[118] This passage can be closely linked with that of Aeschylus. First, both passages refer to

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[117]Herodotus, The Histories, trans. J. Rawlinson, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., London, 1992, III 116, IV 13,27.

[118]ibid, IV 13.

the griffins as gold guarding.[119] The gold that they guard is significant, and although it is not stated in Herodotus, I believe that the gold refers to the wealth of Hades, god of the Underworld, who is sometimes called chthonic Zeus. Second, both passages pertain to lands which lie at the ends of the world, thus suggesting a connection with boundaries which are not only physical, but are also spiritual.[120] This in turn emphasizes the boundary between life and death, which, in turn, emphasizes the chthonic aspects of Zeus, Apollo and Dionysus. In both passages, the griffins dwell in the Northern and/or Eastern parts of the realm, and they are specifically linked to the land of the Hyperboreans.[121] Here a geographic connection between Apollo and the griffin can be noted. Apollo, whose origins are Eastern,[122] annually journeys from the Hyperboreans (located somewhere in the north) to Delphi. The griffins are associated with the north in that they dwell just below the Hyperboreans, the blessed land of Apollo.[123] Therefore, although the relationship between Apollo and the griffin is not explictly stated, it is strongly implied on the basis of geography.

J.D.P. Bolton, who wrote Aristeas of Proconnesus, dates

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[119]ibid, IV 13. Aeschylus, ln. 803-806.

[120]ibid.

[121]Herodotus, IV 13.

[122]Burkert, p. 144.

[123]Herodotus, IV 13.

Aristeas to approximately 625 B.C.[124], and describes him as "devoted to Apollo, with a fervour more commonly felt by the initiates of Dionysus for their god."[125] He also feels that the poem that Aristeas wrote is not a creation of the imagination, but is a result of an actual physical journey to distant lands and is an amalgamation of all that he had seen and heard during his journey.[126] Thus, the journey of an Apollo devotee becomes linked to a fantastical creature, and some of the first connections between the god Apollo and the griffin are established. Yet there is still no mention of the actual purpose of the griffin and what it symbolizes.

C) Griffin on Greek Mainland

The griffin motif was not used solely by the Tarquinians during the late seventh and sixth centuries B.C. The motif was also widely used in mainland Greece as a part of the black-figured vase painting. Athens and Corinth were two mainland centers which often used the motif. Now it must be remembered that Tarquinia, Athens and Corinth were trading with each other during this time period, and it must also be noted that although Tarquinia uses the griffin motif in relief work while Athens and Corinth use it in vase painting, the context is the same: funerary.

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[124]Bolton, J.D.P., Aristeas of Proconnesus Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1962, p. 179.

[125]ibid.

[126]ibid, p.181.

A belly amphora by the Nessos Painter (ill. 12), dated to 635 B.C.- 600 B.C., is one of the earliest examples of the griffin motif in Athenian black-figured ware. The neck of the amphora is decorated with two panthers in a heraldic pose with their faces turned towards the viewer. Details are made not only with incised lines but also with added colours such as white and red. Rosettes are used as fill ornament so that there is very little open space showing. The body of the amphora is filled with the figures of two griffins, again in a heraldic pose, between which sits a bird on an open flower. The griffins, like their counter parts in bronze at Olympia, have long pointed ears, open sharp-beaked mouths, and almond shaped eyes. The head and wings are definitely bird-like, and the body is that of a lion. The wings and musculature are incised. Between the two griffins rests a bird on an open palmette flower. It is difficult to identify the species of bird as part of the bird is missing, though it is likely to be a waterfowl bird, which could symbolize fertility. Rosettes are again used as fill ornaments in this section.

The significance of the griffin motif is not difficult to ascertain. Although it is possible that the griffins are being used to take up space like the rosettes, it is more likely that the motif was specifically chosen for a particular purpose. This amphora, like many others, was found in a funerary context: it was found in the Vari cemetery in

southern Attica.[127] It is very likely that the griffin motif was chosen for its protective and apotropaic qualities which are clearly demonstrated by the finds not only at Olympia, but also in Asia Minor and Etruria.

In Corinth, the griffin was a common motif found on black figure vase painting in the late Orientalizing and early Archaic period. Berlin 1023 (ill. 13), an alabastron dated to approximately 620 B.C.,[128] has two large griffins and a water-bird as its main decoration. The griffins, which stand facing each other in a heraldic pose, appear to be mirror images of each other. The griffins have large pointed ears, sharp open beaks, a large knob on top of the beak, curling tongue, lion body and the wings of a bird. The griffin on the left has its left paw raised to touch the right raised paw of the griffin on the right. Details, such as the almond eyes, musculature and feathers have been incised. A waterbird, possibly representing fertility, lies on the ground beneath the upright paws of the griffins. Its head points up towards the griffins' paws. All details of the bird, such as feathers, eyes, and beak, were incised. A rosette, placed above the back of the bird, fills in the space between the bird and the griffin on the right side.

Like the belly amphora by the Nessos painter, this

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[127]Boardman, J., Athenian Black Figure Vases, Thames and Hudson, London,1988, p.19.

[128]Payne, H., Necrocorinthia: A Study of Corinthian Art in the Archaic Period, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1931, p. 275.

alabastron was found in a funerary context: the cemetery of Corinth.[129] The significance of the griffin motif is therefore not difficult to determine. The griffins were likely chosen for their apotropaic and protective functions, as demonstrated by the griffins found in Olympia, Attica, Asia Minor and Etruria. The fact that they were found in a funerary context strengthens the tie between the griffin and its protective functions after death.

D) Griffin in the Classical Period

Although much later in date, it is during the High Classical and Late Classical Periods that the gods Apollo and Dionysus are depicted in red-figured vase paintings with a griffin. Literary evidence associating these gods with the griffin is not to be found. What is even more curious is the fact that these vases were found in Magna Graecia and not on the Greek mainland. During this particular time period, there was a great deal of disturbance in the Greek world. There were also new views on the role of religion, as well as a rise in the popularity of certain cults, particularly the cults of Dionysus and Apollo. Although the griffin motif is rendered in a different media than those found in Tarquinia and although there is a two hundred year gap between the griffin motif from Tarquinia and that from Southern Italy, the context of the artifacts is the same: funerary. By examining the later material from southern Italy, the later meaning of the

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[129] ibid.

griffin motif becomes clear. Without wanting either to force the point or to digress unnecessarily, we should remember that the Etruscans had a large territorial holding and established emporium at Pontecagnano, south of Salerno, the coastal heartland of Southern Italy: this settlement lasted from ca. 700 B.C. to the fourth century B.C.. The Etruscans were also present at Cumae and Capua. The griffin motif has been found on numerous artifacts there - again all in a funerary context.[130] This, in turn, reinforces the significance of the griffin motif in the sixth century in Etruria.

E) Political Unrest and Religion

The late fifth century was one of turmoil and upheaval for the Greeks. In 431 B.C., the Peloponnesian war broke out between Peloponnesian allies and the Athenians.[131] The war, which lasted for 27 years until 404 B.C., was one of the worst that the Greeks had fought. In the first ten years of the war, Athens experienced a great plague,[132] engaged in many battles, lost and regained Mytilene,[133] and captured Sphacteria.[134] In 421 B.C., Athens agreed to the Peace of

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[130]D'Agostino, B., Due tombe principesche dell'Orientalizzante antico da Pontecagnano, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma, 1977

[131]Thucydides, The Peloponnesian War: the Complete Hobbes Translation, ed. D. Grene, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1989, Book I. 124.

[132]ibid, II.2.

[133]ibid, II. 4, 9-15, 27.

[134]ibid, IV.14.

Nicias,[135] which did not last very long. The Peloponnesians gained control during the final phase of the war (which lasted from 412-404 B.C.).[136] The Athenians lost the war in 404 B.C. when they were forced to surrender after a great naval disaster at Aegospotami.[137]

The loss of the war must have been a terrible blow to the Athenians as they had dominated the Greek world for such a long time. This, in turn, would not only affect their art but also their religion:

> Another effect of the psychological shocks which the Greeks experienced during the Peloponnesian War seems to have been a new direction in Greek religion. Many indications are discernable of a shift in attention away from the group-oriented state religion, in which the individual was important only insofar as he was a participant in the polis, towards cults which involved a personal and emotional relationship with the deity...[138]

The two cults which gain a large following are those of Apollo and Dionysus.

Apollo, the son of Zeus, is the Greek god of music,

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[135]ibid, IV.119.

[136]ibid, VII.

[137]Hornblower, S., The Greek World: 479-323 B.C., Routledge, London and New York, 1983, p. 151.

[138]Pollitt, J.J., Art and Experience in Classical Greece, Cambridge University Press, USA, 1992, p.125.

poetry, light, healing, youth, and instantaneous death.[139] His worship is "spread throughout the Greek world, and pervades both the state and private domain".[140] He is always portrayed as a young god carrying either his lyre or his trademark bow, and the sacred places associated with him were Delphi, and the Hyperboreans (which are also associated with griffins).[141] Apollo's origins are non-Greek: "Apollo was an Asia Minor, or more specifically, a Lycian god; one of his most frequent epithets is Lykeios; the Iliad connects him with Lycia; and besides, he is an enemy of the Greeks in the Homeric epic."[142] Furthermore, the fact that he is the god of healing and of plague points to a connection with the Semetic god of plague, Resep, who, like Apollo, "shoots firebrands."[143] As time passed, Apollo became synonymous with the god of the Orphic religion, and "with his name was associated a whole system of thought and belief, half religious and half moral, which promised safety and eternal life to its initiates".[144] Orphicism was a Greek mystery cult which traced its beginnings to Orpheus, a great musician

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[139]Burkert, p.143-149.

[140]ibid, p.143.

[141]ibid, p.143-149.

[142]ibid, p.144.

[143]ibid, p.145.

[144]Grimal, p.50.

whose father, according to some myths, was Apollo.[145]

The legend of Orpheus centers on his relationship with Eurydice, a woman with whom he fell in love and later married. Shortly after their marriage, Eurydice was bitten by a snake and died. Orpheus was so distraught by her death that he went to Hades to retrieve her. Once in Hades, he was told that Eurydice could return to the upper world if he did not look behind himself on the journey. Of course, on the journey out of Hades, Orpheus looked to see if Eurydice was following him, and as a result her shade returned to the underworld. Orpheus, was once again alone and became very melancholy. One day he was approached by a band of Thracian women who asked him to play a festive song. He refused and they tore him to pieces and threw him in a river.[146] Now, "Orpheus was a singer in the myth. This means that he was regarded as the source of the sacred poems in which Orphicism couched its doctrines...Orphicism is a book religion, the first example of the kind in the history of Greek religion".[147] Basically, Orphicism was based on the belief that Time was the origin of everything, and that after Time came Chaos and Ether.[148] Chaos was the symbol of the infinite and Ether was the sign of

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[145]ibid, p.48 and 50.

[146]New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology, Prometheus Press, USA, 1972, p.198; Verg., Georg., IV, 456 foll.

[147]Nilsson, M.P., A History of Greek Religion, Greenwood Press Publishers, Westport, Connecticut, 1980, p.215.

[148]ibid.

the finite.[149] "Chaos was surrounded by Night, which formed the enveloping cover under which, by the creative action of the Ether, cosmic matter was slowly organized. This finally assumed the shape of an egg of which Night formed the shell".[150] Orphicism "departed from the primitive Greek religion in making the guilt and punishment of the individual the centre of its doctrine. It taught the transmigration of souls and inculcated ritual and moral purity as giving the soul its final release to the life of the blessed".[151] The idea of an afterlife was radical in the Greek world, and the cult of Apollo was associated with it. Apollo thus became a god of light, a god of death, and a god of afterlife.

It is generally agreed that Orphicism had originated in the early part of the sixth century B.C..[152] During the sixth century, Orphic belief was in its zenith with worship being practised not only in Thrace, but also in Sicily, Magna Graecia and in Athens.[153] Orphic worship in Athens was heavily favoured by the Peisistratidae, who ruled Athens from 527 B.C. to 511 B.C. after the death of their father, Pisistratus (tyrant of Athens from 560 B.C. to 527 B.C.).[154]

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[149] Larousse, p.90.

[150] ibid.

[151] Harvey, p.299.

[152] Nilsson, p.214.

[153] ibid.

[154] ibid.

It was during the reign of Pisistratus that the worship of Dionysus, who is generally regarded as a part of Orphic worship, was introduced.[155] In Sicily and Magna Graecia, the Orphic doctrine was combined with the teachings of Pythagoras, and was very popular throughout the sixth century.[156] It was, however, in the fifth century B.C. that "Orphicism sank to the level of a despised, popular sectarian superstition".[157] The Orphic belief system nevertheless, remained popular in Magna Graecia and experienced a revival throughout the Greek world in fourth century B.C.. In Southern Italy, the god Dionysus was also equated with Orphicism.[158] Since Tarquinia had close trade relations with Greece, especially with Corinth (particularly with the Greeks at Graviscae and the worship of Apollo there), and with Sicily, it is very likely that Tarquinia was also exposed to the Orphic doctrine in the sixth-century.[159] Even though the Etruscans also had their own concept of an afterlife before Orphicism, it is possible that their iconography either influenced or was influenced by the unique Orphic belief

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[155]Harvey, p. 330.

[156]Nilsson, p.214.

[157]ibid.

[158]Guthrie, W.K.C., Orpheus and Greek Religion: a Study of the Orphic Movement, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1993, p. 41.

[159]Please see chapter 1 for detailed information on trade relations between Tarquinia and Greece.

system of Magna Graecia.

F) Griffin in Greek Colonies in Southern Italy

The late fifth century provides excellent examples of gods and griffins shown together in art. Although here the griffin is not in the same media as in Etruria, it is in the same context - funerary. By examining the late fifth century vases, the later significance of the griffin motif can be determined and used to strengthen its earlier meaning. There are two late fifth century vases which portray the god Apollo with a griffin. The first is a bell-crater from Agrigento, Berlin 2641[160],(ill.14). The dimensions of the crater and its condition are given by neither Beazley nor Metzger, who are the only sources in our library for this piece. This piece has been dated to approximately 425 B.C. by Metzger, who does not state why he assigns this particular date to this piece.[161]

On side A of the crater, we are shown a scene which portrays the gods Apollo, Artemis and Hermes along with Leto, the mother of Apollo and Artemis. What is very surprising about this scene is that fact that Apollo is shown, on the left hand side of the scene, seated on a griffin. Apollo, draped in a himation and wearing some kind of footwear,

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[160]Beazley, J.D., Attic Red-Figure Vase-Painters second ed. vol. I, II, III, Claredon Press, Oxford, 1963, p.1156.

[161]Metzger, H., Les Représentations dans la Céramique Attique du IVe Siècle, Bibliotheque des Ecoles Francais D'Athenes et de Rome, Paris, 1951, p.169.

carries a laurel branch in his left hand and is approaching Leto, Artemis and Hermes while mounted on the griffin.[162] The himation is loosely draped on Apollo, and appears to fall naturally with the body.

The griffin is simplistically rendered in the red-figure technique. His elongated donkey ears stand erect on his forehead, while his small beaked mouth remains closed and his eyes are focused straight ahead. The mane on the back of his head appears to be a row of sharp spikes rather than hair, and his head and chest are divided by a line which starts at the jaw line of the griffin and curves in an S shape towards the front of the chest. I do not think that the griffin's head really looks like that of a bird - instead, it reminds me of a lizard's head. The wings are definitely bird like, with a lot of attention being given to the depiction of the plumage. The main body is that of a thin lion. This griffin is highly stylized and is not as rigid or as ornate as those from the sixth century and from Asia Minor (ill. 4).

In front of the griffin stands Artemis, mistress of the beasts, who is easily recognized by her bow and quiver. She is a prime example of the Greek principle "representation of the specific in light of the generic".[163] Without the bow and quiver, Artemis could easily be identified as a normal everyday woman as there are no other attributes which

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[162]ibid, p.170.

[163]Pollitt, p.6.

distinguish her as a god. She stands in a three quarter pose with her head turned to look behind herself at Apollo. She wears a chiton which is tied at her waist and is decorated with stars, lozenges, dots and lines. The chiton, though loosely draped, emphasizes the shape of the body underneath.

The next character, also female, has been identified as Leto, the mother of Artemis and Apollo.[164] She is seated in a three quarter pose, wearing an elaborately draped himation, and is in the process of either covering or uncovering her face with her veil. On her head, beneath the veil, lies an elaborate diadem. She holds a long staff, which is capped by a fleur-de-lis design, in her left hand. The identification of this woman as Leto appears to be based on the her placement in this scene with Artemis and Apollo. When I first saw her, I automatically thought that she was Hera because she is seated, wears a diadem and has raised her right hand to cover her face with her veil (a gesture which is commonly associated with Hera). Again, this woman is an example of the principle "specific in light of the generic"[165] - she could be any female except for the fact that she is placed with Artemis and Apollo. Her placement therefore identifies her as Leto.

Behind Leto stands Hermes, the messenger of the gods, who is easily identified by his characteristic caduceus and large

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[164]Metzger, p.170.

[165]Pollitt, p.6.

brimmed hat.[166] He too faces left to see the arrival of Apollo. His naked body is partially clad by his himation which is fully draped over his left arm and is joined together at his right shoulder. Hermes is also shown in a three quarter pose, and appears to be in the process of moving forward towards Leto. Hermes is an interesting god as he was not only the messenger of the gods, but also the "conductor of the souls and dead to Hades".[167]

Metzger considers this scene to be "l'épiphanie d'Apollon"[168]- a depiction of Apollo's arrival into Delphi and a reunion with Artemis, Leto and Hermes: "Désormais nous constatons chez les peintres de vases un souci évident de situer à Delphes même les réunions jadis imprécises d'Apollon, Artémis, Léto et Hermès, et cet essai de localisation s'accompagne de l'apparition de thèmes nouveaux qui on trait à l'épiphanie d'Apollon".[169] Yet, the myths surrounding Apollo's arrival into Delphi do not involve Artemis, Leto and Hermes, let alone a griffin. In one myth involving Apollo and Delphi, Apollo killed the Python, a large snake or dragon originally in charge of Delphi, and took over the

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[166]Harvey, p.205.

[167]ibid.

[168]Metzger, p.169.

[169]ibid.

sanctuary.[170] There was also an annual celebration at Delphi to welcome Apollo home from his journey to the land of the Hyperboreans:

> Zeus...bade him [Apollo] to go at once to Delphi. But the swans first took Apollo to their own country...to the land of the Hyperboreans. There the god spent a year, receiving the respects of the Hyperboreans, then he returned to Greece and made his way to Delphi among feasting and song...Each year at Delphi the arrival of the god was celebrated with hecatombs...[171]

It is possible that this scene (ill. 14), is indeed a representation of the annual celebration, but I think that it may be symbolic of something else. I think that this scene on this crater was meant to represent the death and afterlife aspects of the cult of Apollo. Afterall, Apollo was known as a bringer of death to youths, particularly male youths.[172] His sister, Artemis is also known as a bringer of death, particularly to young females and Hermes is the conductor of

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[170]Grimal, p.47. It has been suggested to me that perhaps the griffin could be substituted for the python in this legend. It is very possible to do this, as the griffin can be interpreted as a kind of dragon: it guards gold, attacks anyone who comes near the gold, and is a frightening creature to behold. This in turn would strengthen the association between the griffin and Apollo, and thus emphasize Apollo's and the griffin's chthonic aspects.

[171]ibid.

[172]Burkert, p.143-149.

the souls and the dead to Hades.[173]

As menticned before, the griffin was associated in the Near East with funerary art and possibly also was a representation of death. Now, the griffin is not mentioned in the myths relating to Apollo and when mentioned in literature, griffins are said to be guardians of gold and dwell in the either the East (according to Aeschylus), or the North (according to Herodotus). There is a geographic connection between Apollo and the griffin. Apollo, whose origins are Eastern,[174] annually journeys from the Hyperboreans (located somewhere in the north) to Delphi. The griffins are associated with the north in that they dwell just below the Hyperboreans, the blessed land of Apollo.[175] It is clear that Apollo and the griffin are associated with each other geographically, artistically, and symbolically. Here (ill. 14), the griffin is being associated with the god of death and afterlife. Therefore, I believe that the griffin is also a symbol of death, and possibly the afterlife. Perhaps the function of the griffin is to protect and to guide the soul on its journey from life to death.

London E 543 (ill. 15) is an oinochoe from Vulci[176](an Etruscan city located not far from Tarquinia) and has been

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[173]ibid, p. 149-152, 156-159.

[174]Burkert, p. 144.

[175]Herodotus, IV 13.

[176]Beazley, p.1348.

dated to approximately 425 B.C..[177] Like Berlin 2641, the dimensions of this oinochoe and information surrounding its discovery and condition are not known as Beazley and Metzger are the only sources in our library for this piece. The griffin is here again associated with Apollo, Leto and Artemis.[178] Apollo is shown mounted on the griffin and is advancing towards a female carrying a bow in her left hand and a bowl (described by Metzger as a "phiale"[179]) in her outstretched right hand. Since she carries a bow, this woman has been identified as Artemis. Once again, the principle "specific in light of the generic"[180] can be noted. If it were not for the bow, she could be identified as a regular female. Her chiton is form-fitting and is emphasized by the many folds which are indicated by black painted lines. As previously mentioned, it is Apollo who rides the griffin. This identification was based on the fact that he carries a laurel branch in his right hand.[181] There is a wreath on his head and he is also wearing a himation, the folds of which can be seen beneath the wing of the griffin. He does not carry any other attributes of Apollo such as the lyre or the bow.

The griffin (ill. 15) is similar to that on the bell

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[177]Metzger, p.169.

[178]Beazley, p.1348.

[179]Metzger, p.170.

[180]Pollitt, p.6.

[181]Metzger, p.170.

crater (ill. 14), except that this griffin is larger in size. The griffin has the characteristic donkey ears which stand erect on his head. He has a small sharp beak and a large rounded face. The mane which runs down the back of his head and neck appears to be a solid mass which has been cut into scalloped spikes rather than a mane of hair. In general the griffin's face doe not really look like that of a bird - I think that it resembles a lizard's or a reptile's face instead. The wings, however, definitely belong to a bird: two rows of flight feathers are clearly shown along with three rows of top feathers. It is also worth noting that the wings of this griffin are almost identical to those of the griffin from Berlin 2641 (ill. 14). The body of the griffin (ill. 15) is that of a lion with details such as musculature added in black paint rather than incision.

Behind the griffin and Apollo stands another female who has been identified as Leto. She stands in a three quarter pose, elaborately draped in a chiton and holds a staff in her left hand and a headband[182] in her right hand. Metzger identified her as Leto because she carried the staff.[183] I am not entirely sure that this character is definitely Leto - however, since she is depicted with both Artemis and Apollo and since she carries the same type of staff as 'Leto' in Berlin 2641 (ill. 14), it can be assumed that she is probably

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[182] ibid.

[183] ibid.

also Leto. If she (ill. 15) had not been depicted with the staff, she could have been identified as an ordinary woman.

Again, Metzger identifies this scene as the coming of Apollo to Delphi.[184] Once again, the geographic connection between Apollo and the griffin is stressed. Apollo, arrives in Delphi from his annual trip to the Hyperboreans, which has been previously discussed. The griffin, as before mentioned, is often geographically associated with the Hyperboreans. Furthermore, Apollo, god of death, afterlife, and associated with Orphicism, is riding the griffin. I believe that this in turn stresses the chthonic aspect of the griffin: after all the griffin is mounted by a god whose ties to Orphicism are very strong. Thus, the griffin can also be said to be representative of death and possibly afterlife.

G) Griffin and Dionysus

The connection between the griffin and the concepts of death and afterlife is strengthened by the griffin's association with the god Dionysus on a red-figured stemless cup from Paestum which is now in a private Japanese collection (ill. 16).[185] Dionysus "was in the Classical Era essentially the god of the vine, of wine and of the mystic ecstasy".[186] The cult of Dionysus had its basis in nature worship:

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[184]ibid, p.169.

[185]Trendall, A.D., The Red-Figured Vases of Paestum, British School at Rome, 1987, p.134.

[186]Grimal, p. 138.

> the ideas of birth and death, germination and decay, derived from Nature's changes, form the foundation of the cult of Dionysus. Upon this foundation mysticism rested, but like all mysticism it was pushed into the background in the official cult, whereas in the Orphic sect it had free course and became a central feature...In the general cult of Dionysus more cannot be seen with certainty than that the god established a connection with ancient festivals of souls...[187]

The story surrounding his birth is interesting. Dionysus was the son of Semele and Zeus. One day, Semele asked to see Zeus as his true self, and he appeared to her as lightening. She was killed instantly, but Zeus was able to save their unborn child and sewed it into his leg. Therefore, when he was born, Dionysus became known as the twice-born god.[188]

The birth of Dionysus is also connected with Orphic religion. According to the Orphics, Zeus and Persephone are the parents of a child named Zagreus (also known as Dionysus). Hera was very jealous of this child and had convinced the Titans to tear it to pieces and to devour it. Athena, however, saved the heart and brought it to Zeus who ate it.

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[187]Nilsson, p.210.

[188]Tripp, E., Crowell's Handbook of Classical Mythology, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1970, p. 203; Pausan., II, 37,5.

Then he seduced Semele who gave birth to Dionysus in Thebes.[189] Thus, he was given the epithet twice born.[190] The epithet also refers to the fact that Dionysus had journeyed to Hades to see his mother and to bring her back to the land of the living.[191] He accomplished this task and returned from Hades unharmed, symbolically conquering death.[192] Dionysus, therefore, can be viewed as a god who also represents the promise of life after death much like Apollo.

Like Apollo, Dionysus has Eastern roots; "the Greek tradition associates Dionysus very closely with Phrygia and Lydia, the Asia Minor kingdoms of the eighth/seventh and seventh/sixth centuries, and also with Kybele, the Phrygian Mother of the gods."[193] Dionysus, therefore, is also geographically associated with the griffin, who dwells, according to Aeschylus in the Eastern part of the world.[194]

Dionysus is shown riding on a griffin in a stemless cup from Paestum dated from approximately 330 B.C.[195](ill. 16).

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[189]ibid.

[190]ibid.

[191]Grimal, p.140.

[192]ibid.

[193]Burkert, p.163.

[194]Aeschylus, ln. 791-794.

[195] Kunstwerke Der Antike Auktion 56, Munzen und Medaillen Ag Basel, 19 Februar 1980, p.61.

The cup, currently in a Japanese private collection[196], is 8 cm. tall and has a diameter of 34.5 cm including the handles.[197] On the interior of the cup, we see Dionysus riding on a winged griffin towards the right. He carries a thyrsos in his right hand and a round, ball-like object in his left hand. His ornamented himation is draped around his body, and he wears a strip of cloth in his hair.

The griffin is similar to those we have seen on Berlin 2641(ill. 14), and London E 543(ill. 15). It has long donkey like ears, a small open beak, and a face which more closely resembles a lizard rather than a bird. The wings are elaborately decorated, and appear to be in motion, thus lifting the griffin off of the stage platform. The body is that of a lion, with details such as musculature added in black paint rather than incision.

Dionysus is followed "by a papposilen"[198], and preceded by "a phlyax with a torch."[199] Above the head of Dionysus, there is a window with a bird and beneath the griffin jumps a small cat.[200] In the exergue, there is a "nude youth crawling on all fours to [the] left."[201] The rotunda is

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[196]Trendall, p.134.

[197] Kunstwerke, p.60.

[198]Trendall, p.134.

[199]ibid.

[200]ibid.

[201]ibid.

surrounded by a ring of laurel leaves.

In the auction catalogue, the scene is described as a "Komodienszene",[202] perhaps a satyr play, consisting of a slave, Dionysus on a griffin, and a Silen.[203] This is a possible explanation, especially since there is a youth who is crawling underneath the main scene (ill. 16) - he is like a stagehand beneath the stage. The phlyax, who is leading the way with a torch appears to be a comedic character wearing a mask and having a round belly and stubby legs. The papposilen who follows Dionysus is comedic in action as he "presses both his hands on the griffin's rump as if to give him a forward push to start him on his way."[204] The actions of the characters remind me of the preparations for a play just before the rise of the curtain. If this is indeed a representation of a satyr play, it is worth noting that the satyr plays were only performed during the Great Dionysia, a religious festival in honour of Dionysus and the birth place of tragedy.[205] The religious aspect of Dionysus is therefore emphasized.

Since the griffin(ill. 16) is associated in an art form with Dionysus, it should be noted that there are no myths wherein Dionysus and the griffin appear together. As a matter

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[202] Kunstwerke, p.60.

[203] ibid.

[204] Trendall, p.134.

[205] Harvey, p. 434.

of fact, there are no known myths which involve a griffin in any manner at all, with or without a god. I believe that the griffin is a symbol of death and afterlife - it is a personification of that particular function of Dionysus and his cult. The association between the griffin and Dionysus is further strengthened by a geographic connection: Dionysus has very strong ties to the east and is said to have originated there, and the griffin is also thought by Aeschylus to dwell in the eastern part of the world.

H) Conclusion about Griffin in Greek and Greek Influenced World

In conclusion, the following can be said about the griffin motif and its significance in the Greek world. First, it is not originally a Greek motif. It originated in Syria in the second millennium B.C., and "was known throughout the Near East, including Mesopotamia, and in Greece by the fourteenth century BC."[206] "It may have been magically protective, but its precise associations and functions are unknown."[207] Henri Frankfort, however, is of the belief that the griffin is "the embodiment of a mysterious power, perhaps a personification of Death."[208] I am inclined to agree with him, especially since the griffin in the Near East was also

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[206]Black, p.101.

[207]ibid.

[208]Frankfort, p.154.

associated with funerary art.[209] I also believe that it is symbolic of death and the afterlife during the Classical period because it is associated with Apollo and Dionysus, both of whom are gods associated with Orphicism and the afterlife. The connection between these gods and the griffin is further strengthened by a geographic link: Apollo and Dionysus have Northern and Eastern origins, and the griffin is said to live either below the Hyperboreans (land sacred to Apollo), or in the far East (where Dionysus is from). The griffin motif is also connected to Zeus, father of the gods. Literary and archaeological evidence shows that the griffin is strongly tied to the apotropaic and chthonic aspects of Zeus. This in turn emphasizes the significance of the griffin motif - it is symbolic of death and the afterlife.

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[209]Black, p.101.

IV Conclusion

Taking into consideration the archaeological, literary and historical evidence, much can be said about the significance of the griffin motif on the nenfro stelae in Tarquinia.

The griffin motif is thought to have originated in Syria in the second millennium B.C. where it had religious significance and was shown in funerary art.[210] It was thought not only to have been an apotropaic motif but also a protective one, and in some cases may have represented death itself.[211]

In Greece, the griffin motif was used in a variety of media from the seventh century B.C. through the Classical Period. In the seventh century B.C. in Olympia, the griffin motif is found in the sanctuary of Zeus. Here the motif is rendered not in vase painting or stone relief, but in bronze work: bronze griffin protomes (ill.10) and a bronze plaque of a mother griffin and baby (ill.11). It is not known who made such grand dedications in the sanctuary, but since the sanctuary (and oracle) belongs to Zeus, it is assumed that these artifacts were dedicated to him. It is also possible that the dedications were a few of the prizes won at the Olympic games whose origins are funerary. The dedications therefore are associated with death, and the fact that the

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[210]Black, p.101.

[211]Frankfort, H., p.154.

dedications are in the sanctuary of Zeus strengthens the connection between Zeus and death. Zeus, as the father of the gods, is also a highly respected god, and is generally regarded as being a protector of those who worship him. The griffins also reflect that aspect of Zeus. Like the god, they are a protective motif, and in light of the funerary origins of the games, the griffins reflect the chthonic aspect of Zeus. Literary evidence further strengthens the connection between the griffin and chthonic Zeus.

Corinth and Athens, cities with whom Tarquinia traded, also utilize the griffin motif during the seventh century B.C. In these centres, the motif is painted on black-figure vases, and is used quite regularly along with lion and sphinx motifs. Lion and sphinx motifs are apotropaic and protective motifs. The griffin also performs this function. The context of the painted artifacts is also funerary, thus emphasizing the death aspect of the griffin motif, in that the griffin protects the dead and frightens away the evil spirits.

Meanwhile, in Etruria a parallel situation exists. The griffin motif is found throughout the Orientalizing and Archaic periods in many areas of Etruria. The motif is noted particularly at Poggio Civitate (Murlo) and at Facina. At Poggio Civitate, the griffins are found in association with a building complex that serves both sacred and secular functions. The gods that are worshipped there are Tin(ia), Uni and Minerva. It has been demonstrated that Tin(ia), who

is often likened to Zeus and Jupiter, serves many of the same functions as Zeus and Jupiter - he throws lightening bolts, he is a sky god, and he carries a sceptre. He is also strongly associated with death as he is also the god of boundaries (both physical and spiritual). This funerary aspect is further strengthened by a votive deposit found at Facina. The deposit, which was a banquet set with four large wine mixers decorated with griffin protomes, was buried. The deposit must have been dedicated to a god, and the logical god with whom it could be associated is Tin(ia), the god of boundaries, and therefore it is also associated with death. The votive cup from Tarqu ia which is dedicated to the sons of Tin (who are chthonic gods) and is dated to the late sixth century B.C., shows that the cult of Tin(ia) was also firmly established in Tarquinia by the mid sixth century B.C.

When Apollo is introduced to the Etruscan pantheon in the sixth century B.C., he acquires many characteristics that were once associated with Tin(ia), just as he had done when he was introduced into the Greek pantheon. It is therefore likely that Apollo became synonymous with Orphicism, death and the afterlife in Etruria just as he had in Greece during the sixth century and beyond. In Greece, Apollo had been known as the bringer of sudden death since the writings of Homer, but with the advent of Orphicism, which was supposedly started with his son, he became the saviour after death. Orphicism spread to Italy via the colonies, just as the cult of Apollo spread to

Etruria and Italy through Graviscae and other colonies.

It is during the late fifth century B.C. that the griffin motif is being depicted with gods in the red-figured pottery of Southern Italy (Magna Graecia). The gods with which the griffin motif is associated are very important: the griffin is being shown with Apollo and Dionysus, sons of Zeus and gods of death and the afterlife. Both of these gods belong to the Orphic system of beliefs, which originated in the early sixth century B.C. in Thrace and quickly spread to Athens and Magna Graecia (through Pythagoras). Orphicism reached its zenith in the sixth century, and experienced a revival in the late fifth and early fourth centuries B.C. in Greece and in Magna Graecia. The griffin motif, in association with these gods, thus becomes synonymous with the concepts of death and the afterlife in the fifth century B.C. The geographic connection between the griffin motif and the Eastern origins of both Apollo and Dionysus further strengthens this belief.

The concepts of death and the afterlife, as before mentioned, were known to the Etruscans before the spread of Orphicism to Southern Italy in the sixth century B.C. The later connection between the griffin motif and the gods Apollo and Dionysus, who represent death and the afterlife in the fifth century, strengthens the earlier association between the griffin motif, death, afterlife and protection.

The nenfro stelae of Tarquinia and the various origins of the motifs which decorate the stelae, clearly reflect

Tarquinia's historical and archaeological contacts with Corinth and the Phoenicians. It is clear that the stelae and their motifs are likely to have been influenced by or taken inspiration from the art and motifs of those other geographic and ethnic regions. Having looked at trade, religion, the significance of other art motifs in association with the griffin, and the later significance of the griffin motif in art, it can be said that the significance of the griffin motif on Tarquinian nenfro stelae in the seventh century B.C. is one of death, protection and afterlife.

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